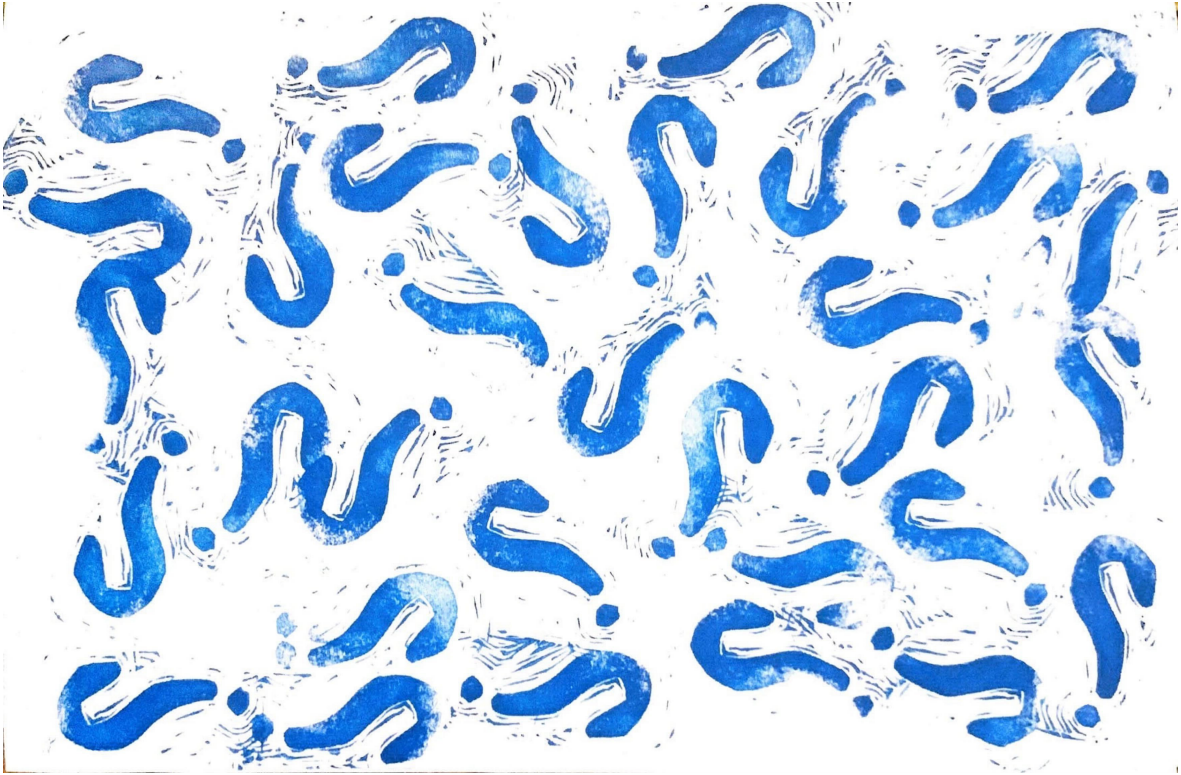
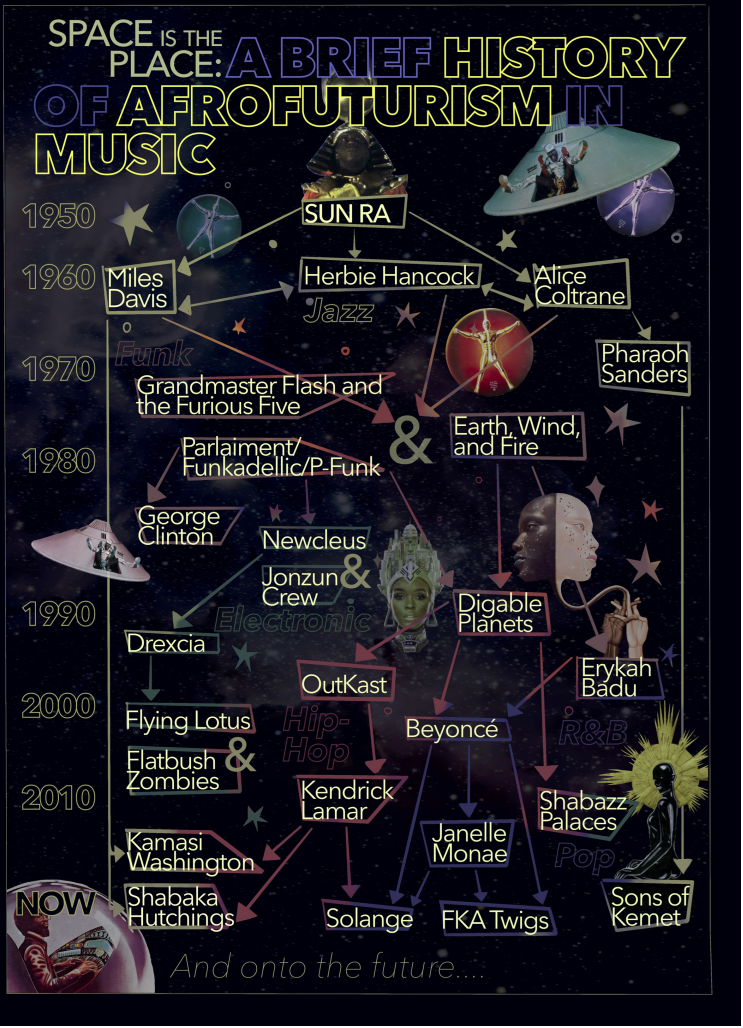
THE
BAT
ISSUE #4

THE FUTURE



SPACE IS THE PLACE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFROFUTURISM IN MUSIC



as i've been reading more about the interdependencies between "israel" and "india," i'm processing that their fates, dismantling and destruction are linked. what if india didn't exist anymore? the more i read about geopolitics, the more i feel like nation-states should not exist. state-craft is always violent and evil and oppressive.

i've been really inspired by the speculative and the understanding that i do not need to know the logic step-by-step of how exactly we get to our liberated future in order to envision it. i've been turning to writing stories again, navigating a kind of world where india and israel do not exist. in these snippets, i am thinking about how we build relationships and communities on care and healing and resistance, how we understand our identities, identity-formation, memory, history, how we build authentic and real solidarity, with magic and fantasy and post-apocalypse spiraled in it all.

We collect the water between when the sunrays hit the north edge of our village to when they begin to barely singe the thatched roof of the Anda House. It's been getting harder to keep up recently, and I'm sure it's because Kholi's eyes have begun to crack.

I mean—he seems confident. But he *always* seems confident—and he *always* needs humbling. I'd slow us down on purpose just so the roof can burn and he could get in trouble. Maybe it'd just be easier to punch him in the face.

Suraa! Myraben narrowed her eyes at me with a sharp jerk of her head. I met her gaze and shrugged, chin-up. ***What?*** I blinked a few times and smiled thinly. ***Don't you dare bare your teeth. We are here for not much longer. The river spills easily this cycle.***

I squinted my eyes. I didn't expect her to scold me over that. ***Kholi keeps flaking on going to the archives to use his bird eyes***—I caught her hands still for a second—***he's probably overusing them...what?***

I told him to stop going to the archives.

What? Why? If it's because we're reading about "India—"

Do not say that word! Her hands plunged into the water, the force constraining my hands down in the rippling. I tensed, eventually melting into a steady vibration, able to pull my hands to hover again. They stung.

You do as I say. Let rest. I stifled the urge to roll my eyes. She knows I'm only going to the archives so much because she won't pass down her memory-relic. Some of the other collectors were watching us curiously, aware something had happened, but not able to grasp exactly what.

Once we finished, we began our way back to the city in silence.

Myraben was watching her feet today.

Myraben?

Yes, Suraa?

I want this memory-relic activated. What do I have to do?

You can't force it.

Why not? Am I not ready?

It's not that you are not ready.

Then what?

I am afraid. It is heavy. If one of your answers to conflict or upset is to punch people in the face, I am afraid of what you will do with this memory-relic unblocked. My breath hitched. She's never said that she's afraid of me. *I wouldn't actually punch him!*

It is still a response.

You know I wouldn't punch him. I'm just annoyed at him.

It is not about him. You will live with this memory-relic forever. It will be painful to be around people who do not have it unblocked. Pain will seep out of you. You have good intentions, Suraa. But there is so much blood and violence. You do not know where to put that. It could poison the water.

I can sense that "India" brings a lot of fear for her. It feels like a festering, a fear of something returning, or something lingering. *Surely the water holds more grief than any of us possibly can. Maybe it can handle the poison.*

Flames are the only fate for countries bent on violence. I know you know about "India" and "Israel." Our jobs as water collectors are to steep and cool the land. We do not let the inflammation erupt.

7th GRADE
& JUNIOR
YEAR NiYu
KNOW Each other
70 Yr old me is here
we share, not books
& hands, secrets &
friends, we look
forward & behind
forward & behind
forward and behind
and ask are you
there?

FUTURE_ISM

clara fee

Sometimes I feel that I want to build a RADICAL FUTURE. Other times that feels hopeless and I want to preserve this money-life while I still can.

Everyone is secretly rich. It is illegal to laugh and it is a burden to be here. My complexes have complexes. The pearls of wisdom are littering the floor but I have no basket with which to pick them up. I feel bad but not bad enough.

I feel good but not good enough. I think about a RADICAL FUTURE. Are you still there, God? It's me, Margaret. When I was a child, my father told me my cat went to heaven. Then the next day he said that, actually, nobody knows what happens after anybody dies, including my cat. I was spitting mad.

I am financially non-catastrophic. In fact I am quite financially sustainable. What if I had a trust fund? Would it make me a better person? Will my mother work until she keels over, 86 and decrepit, on the job? I want to buy my mom a house. It feels centering, like meditation. I have a binary perception of nothing, hand-to-God-on-my-momma, except for everything about myself and my abilities and my body and my clothing choices. I want to establish a regime. I want to start over from scratch and do it right this time. Nobody can call themselves anything.

When the last terrible evil figure in my life told me he wanted to run away to a cabin in the woods and never speak to anyone ever again I was spitting mad. For me it is hard to sympathize with inability.

What happens if my body gives out? I want a RADICAL FUTURE. I can't even imagine myself less a couple square inches of flesh. It's impossible for me to un-tether myself from Google Calendar. I know that it's possible because other people tell me so.

Maybe I will run away to a cabin in the woods and never speak to anyone ever again and shave my head. I do not think it would help.

a selection of words from my email inbox

unlock the future of AI with CMSC B383-002 // Future Female IT Leader, // electronic music, in all of its genres and forms, is the future of music — // In the future, please make sure that you // In the future, speakers for our Spring 2024 colloquia // IP address owner refrains from future use of // shape the future of our club // Remove me from future messages // Consider law school in your future plans // impact the future of Philadelphia // role in shaping a sustainable future // empowering future for ALL children // future drone swarm applications in the age of Machine Learning and AI // will carry on this spirit to future days. // Invest in Her Future: Learn About Investment Management Careers // from Meta in the future, // This benefit may change or end in the future. // Your future job is waiting... // all the best in your future career endeavors and hope // "I hope it will change in the future." // may reach out if future jobs better match your skill set // may not be available in the future. // This boils my blood. Click to see the future of // unsubscribe from future emails //

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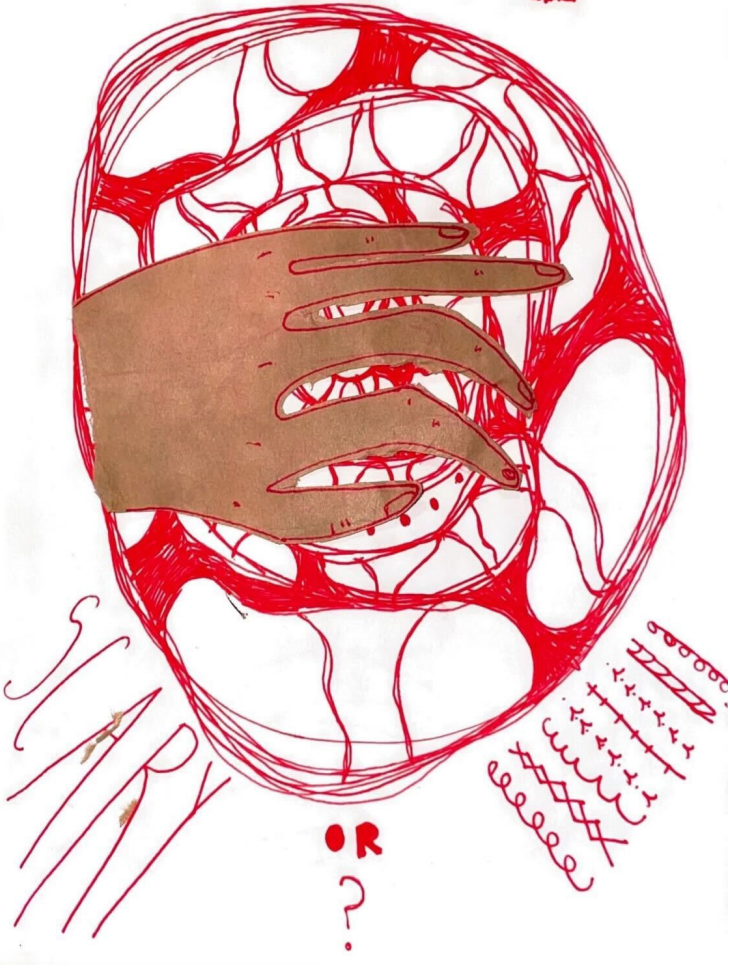

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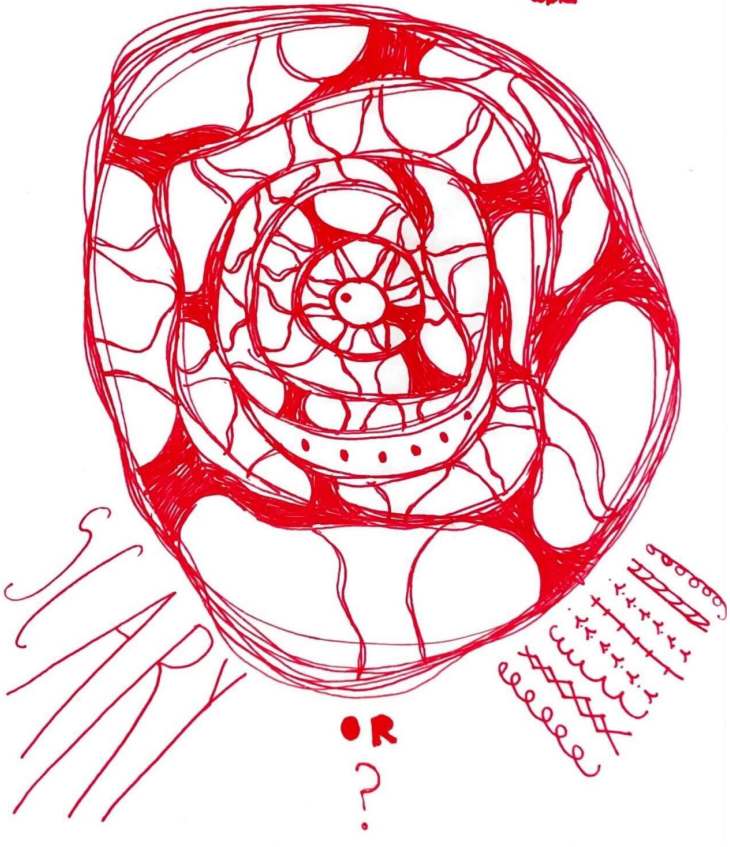

Politics centered entirely around criticism are fun – oh, I love to bitch and moan and critique and complain –

but they're not sustainable.

what worlds will we create, when our current one is dismantled? Who will we be? How will we live?

How will we love?

How will we know each other? How will we know the world?

We must fight with our visions of our futures in our hearts, knowing what we will create.

I don't know yet. I'm 21. I don't know anything.

But I know that the future holds something.

I know that the future holds change.

I believe it will be good.

the bat is an independent zine written and created entirely by members of batten house. consider compensating us for our time and to support future issues! venmo $2-$5 to @meeragrace